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ABSTRACT

Service agencies on a campus tend to operate in parallel isolation, at times working at cross purposes. A consultant from a counseling center can act as a liaison and resource person for a campus police department while developing the relationship between the two offices. The process of developing a consulting relationship is described. Potential benefits for students due to cooperation of counselors and police officers are identified. On a larger scale is the possibility of cooperative programming by service agencies with overlapping interests. (Author)

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Consultation: An Organized Effort to Impact the Campus
I. Smorgasbord Consultation With Campus Police

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Everybody works from his own point of view. That fact, and the tendency of each of us to stay on his own turf, often diminishes the degree of cooperation and communication between service agencies. Even though the psychologist in the Counseling Center and the campus police officer may serve the same students, they frequently do so in isolation of each other - perhaps at cross purposes on occasion. One way for this fragmentation to be handled is for a Counseling Center to assign one psychologist to act as a liaison, resource person, and consultant to the campus police department. The task of the consultant is to serve as a resource and develop the relationship between the two offices.

Police departments are often difficult systems to enter. Because of their very nature, police departments everywhere will tend to be political footballs or objects of scandal if they are not careful. Moreover, many people over-identify with police officers and wish to become involved for inappropriate reasons. Every department will have some "junior G-men" who want to hang around and be "helpful." For these reasons, it is appropriate for a psychological consultant to be clear about his intentions, and what he has to offer.

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then be patient about the entry process. It may be a matter of months before trust is established.

We initiated the process at Kent by obtaining sanction from the top of both organizations. Sanction grew from a meeting at which we explored the possibilities of the Counseling Center and Police Department working together in different ways. We reviewed our relationship, and inquired as to the needs of the police department through the eyes of its new chief and his top ranking detective.

To demonstrate our commitment, we were ready to respond in some substantive way to any request at this point. One need which was identified was for psychological screening tests for new applicants, especially since officers on our campus carry firearms. We agreed to administer an objective test, the results of which would be used not to deselect, but to suggest additional lines of inquiry for the police department's own selection investigation. In this way, we responded to the request without going so far as to take any decision-making responsibility away from the department.

The most immediate request for help came from the new Director of Security. He was concerned about lack of communication among his supervisory officers; apparently a legacy from the prior administration. Organizational development was thus the first consultative effort. We facilitated a one session problem-solving group in which 9 departmental members on the supervisory level and above, discussed work roles, communication, and organization problems. Supervisors at that meeting decided that they needed to take more initiative in clarifying their own needs and resolving conflicts, rather than waiting for the Director of Security to do it for them. The result of the meeting was a commitment to take on more responsibility by the supervisory officers.

What was important to us was that we demonstrate our good faith and commitment by responding promptly to the initial requests made of us by our consultee organization. This does not mean we responded reflexively, of course, since negotiation and planning was involved, but we did show by our behavior that we were ready to get actively involved. It should be mentioned also that throughout this entry phase, and afterward, the project was actively discussed with other staff members of the Center to maintain their support. They were always helpful.

The development phase of our project was aided by the fact that Kent State University has a regional police training academy which is tied administratively to the police department. The director of the training academy is also Director of Training in the police department. The consultation project became a two-pronged device in the development stage, with the training academy being the focus. The academy, it should be made clear, is available for inservice training to all police departments in Northeast Ohio. While related to the police department, its aim is larger in scope.

The Counseling Center staff was asked by the Director of the Academy to develop workshops in several areas. The first workshop dealt with sexual offenders and victims, and was well received judging by brief written evaluation of the attending officers. Most importantly, the workshops have demonstrated our willingness to be flexible and play an educational consultant role. In fact, the staff of the Counseling Center has been willing to be useful to the Academy with a variety of such workshops and training sessions. At the same time, the consultant made himself available as a problem-solving resource, making it clear that he would not report information shared with him to his

staff. He met regularly with a key person who obtained sanction to discuss departmental problems.

In addition, we collaborated in the writing of a grant application for a project to provide "stress inoculation training" for a county-wide area. The grant was not funded due to the change in state administration, but we are in the process of reapplication. Such collaboration is indicative of a co-equal working relationship, and will be extended to the mutual development of a curriculum of police training for the academy. Modules of training will be aimed largely at the time spent by an officer - the largest part of routine time - on non-ciminal matters. The curriculum might include such topics as:

1. Dealing with victims of sexual offense and with sexual offenders.
2. Making intervention in a family disturbance.
3. Helping the person who is depressed and suicidal.
4. Psychological stress in police work.
5. Dealing with ethnic conflict.
6. Solving supervisory problems - for supervisors.
7. Coping with disasters and crisis behavior.

It is not the intent of the Counseling Center to become police trainers exclusively. Part of the potential curriculum can best use other offices on campus as a resource, and it would be important for the academy to rely upon a variety of resources. Part of the task of the consultant is to facilitate the search for, and utilization of other resources, so as to extend support for the academy. Part of the payoff for the Counseling Center is an increase in contact and communication on the part of consultant, consultee, and the resource person's office. That is, we increase our involvement with the campus community.

For instance, a Black student group approached the police department with a request for support in setting up a "crime-hot-line." The purpose of the volunteer hot-line, to be manned by Black students, would be to reduce crime-victimization of Blacks and send out mediating parties to reduce ethnic conflict. In discussing the benefits and deficits of the potential program and clarifying the administrative concerns which might arise, it became clear that there would be a question of overlapping authority among the Black student mediators, the security aides (mostly white students hired by the residence halls), and the campus police officers.

The consulting relationship at this point provides an unanticipated opportunity to become involved with a serious campus problem, involving both security and ethnic conflict. This is an area where we would indeed hope to have a beneficial impact upon the campus community since we can assume problems in these areas affect student mental health. It is not clear what our role will be, but there is a clear convergence of concern on the part of a number of administrators and students. The offices on campus which have an interest in dealing with the problems of residence hall security and ethnic conflict are offices of Student Residence Life (where we also have a consultation program), the campus police, and the Office of Human Relations, which is concerned with the minority student.

While the consultation effort has focused in large part on programming, the project has enhanced the working relationship of the Counseling Center and the Police Department in terms of day to day operations. For example, a girl in a sorority was discovered, through police aid, to be a kleptomaniac responsible for a series of thefts. The police officer involved telephoned

to inquire as to the alternatives to arrest - related to treatment - which would be in the best interests of the arrested girl. It turned out she was already in treatment, and it was suggested that there be some encouragement for her to inform her therapist.

By the same token, the Counseling Center enjoys the cooperation of the police department in crisis situations. As an example, when a student client expressed concern over his ability to control his aggressive impulses, the counselor (in this case the Counseling Center Director) enlisted the aid of a police officer. He invited the officer into the counseling session, whereupon the officer patiently listened, then using the full weight of his authority quietly explained the consequences of acting-out anger. Together, counselor and officer were able to help the student control his behavior. In matters of behavior which is a threat to the life of self or others, it is abundantly clear that a counseling center and police department have clearly overlapping interests, and the student can only benefit by the cooperation of the authority figures who set limits upon his behavior.

Portions of this paper were presented at the American College Personnel Association, Atlanta, 1975.